CINDERELLA

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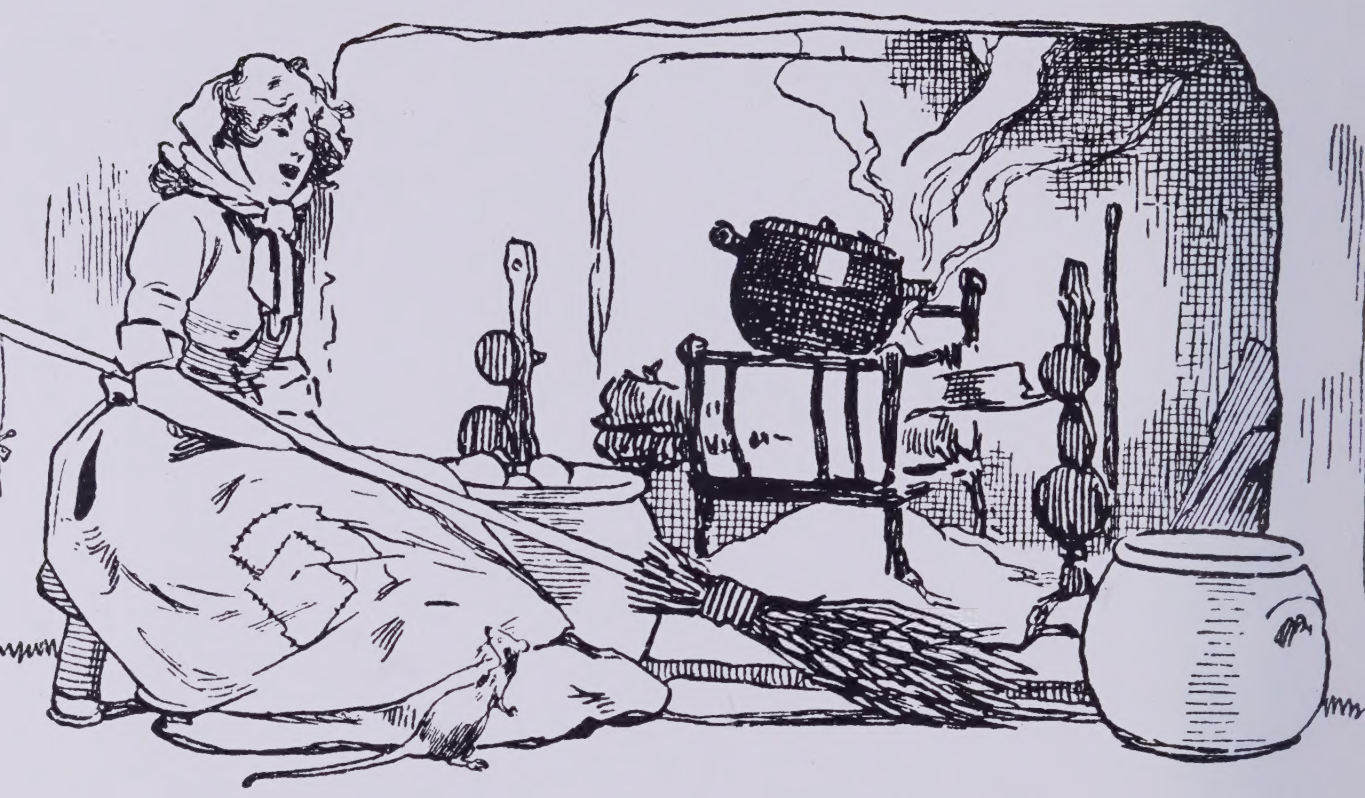

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a gentleman, who, marrying again, took for his wife a very proud woman.

This woman had two daughters as proud as herself. The gentleman had one daughter who was gentle and good.

The new wife hated her new step-daughter, whose face reflected her gentle ways and the sweetness of her temper and made the ill manners and frowning faces of her two daughters appear as disagreeable and ugly as they really were.

So she set her new daughter to do all the meanest work of the house. The young girl swept and baked and washed for the whole household. She wore only shabby clothes and slept in a bare garret.

However, she did not complain, but bore all the hard tasks with patience.

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When her work was finished, she would sit down among the cinders in the chimney-corner, so her step-sisters, who were also unkind to her, gave her the name, Cinderella.

Now, it happened that the King's son made up his mind to give a ball and to invite to it, all of the people of fashion in that countryside. There was to be dancing for two evenings, and the supper and entertainment were to be of a very splendid kind.

Cinderella's sisters were invited, and very proud and happy they were. They talked of the smart dresses they would wear, and the grand folk they would meet at the palace.

"I shall look well in blue satin, with a feather in my hair," said the elder sister.

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"None will be finer than I, in my red and gold velvet and my plumed turban," said the younger.

Cinderella listened sadly to their talk, for she too would have liked to go to the palace, wear a splendid dress and join in the merrymaking.

When the great day came, Cinderella was busy from morning till evening, helping her sisters get ready for the ball.

She laced their gowns, dressed their hair, arranged their feathers and jewels, and even put their slippers on them.

And while she did this, they teased her, to amuse themselves.

"Would you not like to go to the ball, Cinderella?" they asked.

"I think that in my shabby frock, I should be out of place in the King's palace," replied Cinderella gently.

"Yes, indeed," said her sisters, laughing, "A cinder-wench at a ball would make all the world stare and mock!"

At last the sisters were ready, and with their mother they drove away to the palace.

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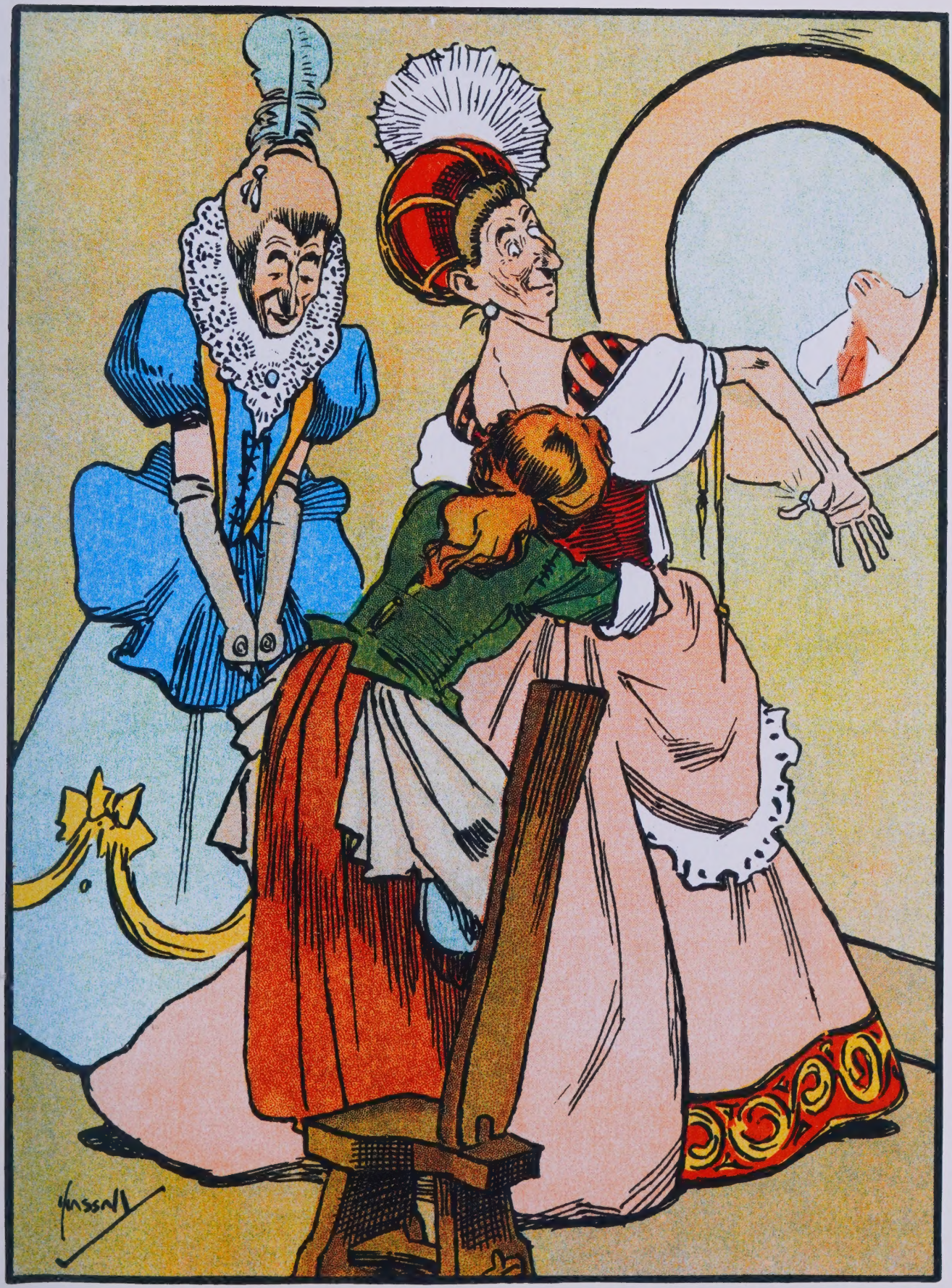

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When they were gone, Cinderella, left alone, sat down among the cinders and began to cry.

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"Oh! I wish...I wish..." she sobbed.

"What do you wish?" asked a kind voice.

Cinderella was so startled that she left off crying. She looked up and saw, standing before her, an old lady wearing a red cloak and a pointed hat, leaning on a stick.

Cinderella knew this old lady to be her Godmother, and that she was a fairy.

"I can guess what you wish," said the Fairy Godmother. "You wish to go to the ball at the palace."

"Yes, indeed I do, dear Godmother," cried Cinderella eagerly.

"Well, and so you shall," replied the old lady. "You are a good girl and you deserve to be happy. So dry your eyes and do as I tell you and you shall be at the ball in next to no time."

Cinderella, all smiles now, jumped up from her stool by the hearth.

"Run into the garden," her Godmother went on, "And fetch me the largest pumpkin you can find."

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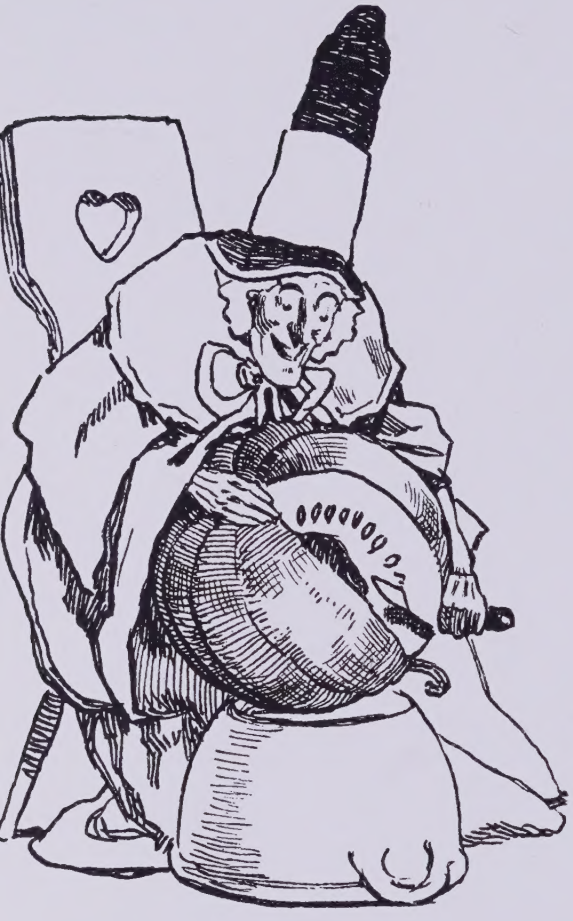

Away went Cinderella, and very soon she ran back, hugging a big yellow pumpkin.

The Fairy Godmother scooped out the inside of the pumpkin, leaving nothing but the rind. This she touched with her stick, which was really a magic wand, and at once the pumpkin rind became a fine white coach, decorated with gold and lined with yellow satin.

"Now fetch the mousetrap," said she, and Cinderella obeyed quickly.

In the mousetrap were six mice. The Fairy Godmother opened the trap and, as each mouse ran out, she touched it with her wand and it became a sleek and prancing horse.

"There are your coach and horses," said she. "Now get the rat trap."

So Cinderella brought the rat trap, in which there were three rats.

The Fairy Godmother chose the finest of the three rats and touched it with her wand. Immediately, the rat turned into a tall and handsomely dressed coachman.

"Behind the watering pot are six green lizards," said the Fairy Godmother, "Bring them here."

Cinderella brought the six lizards and, at a touch of the Fairy Godmother's wand, each one was changed into a smart footman, in a splendid uniform.

The coachman mounted the box and a footman climbed to the back of the

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coach, while another held the door open for Cinderella.

"Now your coach is ready," said the Fairy Godmother.

"But how can I go to the ball like this?" asked Cinderella, looking down at the shabby frock she was wearing.

"You shall soon be more splendid than your coach," replied her Godmother, and she tapped her lightly on the head with her wand.

Then Cinderella's old clothes were turned into robes of silk and velvet, glittering with jewels. And the Fairy Godmother gave her a beautiful little pair of shining glass slippers, the prettiest that ever were seen.

So, with splendid clothes and a happy heart, Cinderella stepped into her coach.

"Remember," said her Godmother, "you must leave the ball before the clock strikes twelve. If you do not, your coach will again become a pumpkin rind, your horses will become mice, your coachman will turn into a rat and your footmen into lizards; while you will find yourself once more in your shabby old clothes."

Cinderella promised to remember. Then the coachman whipped up the horses, the footman held up their heads and clung to the back of the coach, and away they went.

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When the coach drove up to the palace, the Prince, who had been told that a great princess had arrived, came out to receive Cinderella and to lead her into the ballroom.

As she entered, the musicians ceased playing and the dancers stopped dancing, while all gazed in surprise at the lovely unknown princess.

All the evening the Prince stayed at Cinderella's side; dancing with her, talking with her, and serving her with dainty dishes at suppertime. Indeed, his mind was so much taken up with her that he forgot to eat a morsel himself.

At the supper table, Cinderella took a seat beside her sisters. She talked kindly to them and gave them some of the fruit that the Prince brought to her. But, though the sisters were greatly pleased by her attention, they did not guess

that this gracious princess was really their own despised Cinderella.

While she was talking to them, a clock chimed the quarter before twelve. Cinderella then rose, and after curtseying to the company, left the palace immediately and drove home in her magic coach.

Then she thanked her Godmother for her kindness, which had given her so much happiness, and asked leave to go to the ball again the next evening, as the Prince had specially begged her to come.

At that moment there was a knock at the door and the Fairy Godmother, and with her Cinderella's beautiful clothes, vanished as suddenly as she had come. Cinderella drew back the bolt and let her stepmother and sisters in.

The sisters were full of the story of the beautiful princess who had been at the ball.

"She paid us a great deal of attention," said they, "And no one knows who she is, though the Prince admires her so much that he would give half his kingdom to find out."

"How much I should like to see this princess!" said Cinderella, smiling. "Will you, dear sisters, lend me a dress so that I can go to the ball tomorrow?"

"You go? Indeed!" sneered her sisters, "A fine figure you would be at a ball! We would not be seen with you."

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On the next evening the sisters again went to the palace.

And Cinderella went, too, in her coach, even more beautifully dressed than before. The Prince again kept close beside her and said so many kind things to her that, Cinderella in her happiness, forgot how quickly the hours were flying by. She thought it was not yet eleven when the clock began to strike twelve.

Then she started up in affright and fled from the ballroom as quickly as a deer.

The Prince ran after her but could not catch her. All he could find of her was a little glass slipper, lying on the staircase.

The guards said that no one had passed through the palace gates but a little kitchen maid in shabby clothes. Nor had they seen the princess' coach drive away, although it was gone from the palace courtyard. Where it had stood lay a hollow pumpkin rind, which no one had noticed before. And in the palace larder a fine rat and six mice were enjoying themselves, while six little green lizards crept into the crannies in the stone wall of the palace garden.

While the Prince was searching the palace for Cinderella, she was running home, breathless, in her old clothes, with none of her finery left but one little glass slipper.

When her sisters returned home, they were in quite a flutter of excitement about what had happened at the ball.

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They told Cinderella that the beautiful princess had been there again, and that just as the clock struck twelve, she had run from the hall and disappeared, dropping one of her glass slippers in her haste.

"The Prince himself picked it up," they said, "And is so much in love with the wearer of it that he has vowed to marry her whom it will exactly fit."

Next morning, folk were aroused by the sound of trumpets, as through the streets of the town came the royal chamberlain, with guards and an attendant carrying the little glass slipper on a velvet cushion.

From house to house they went, and everywhere the slipper was tried upon the feet of all the young women in each house; whether they were princesses, court ladies, citizens' daughters or only poor cottage wenches.

But no foot was found that the glass slipper would fit. Some were too long, others too short; some were too broad, others too narrow.

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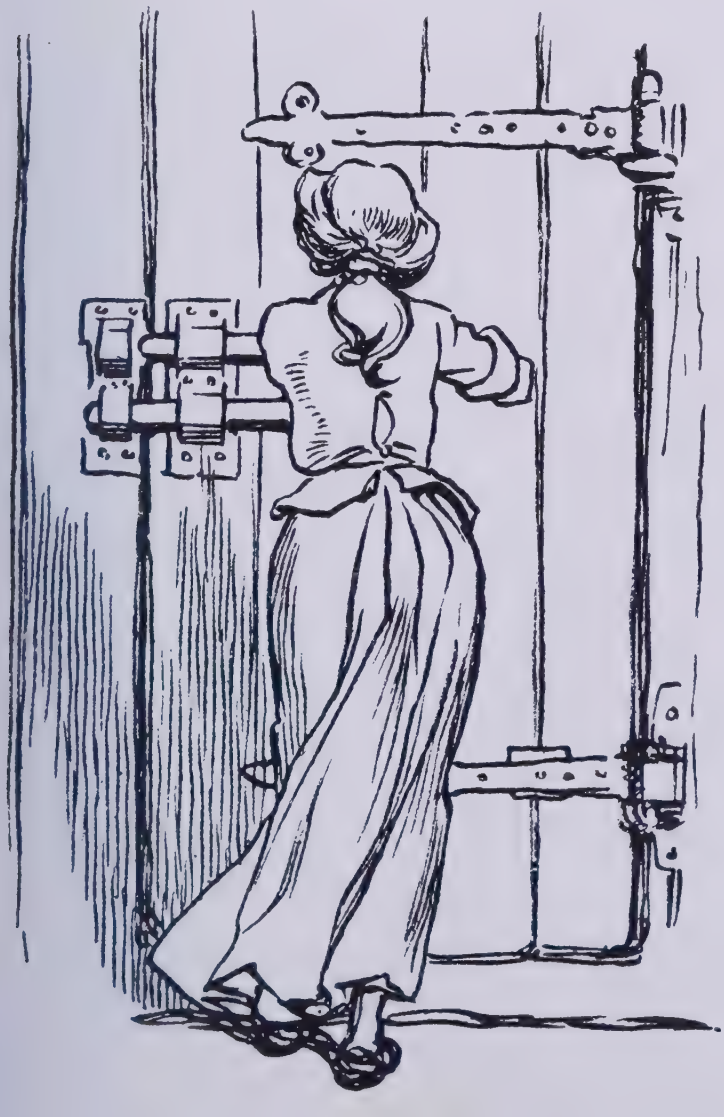
So, by and by the royal chamberlain arrived at the house of Cinderella's father.

Cinderella's sisters were in a great haste to try on the slipper. But, though they pinched their toes and squeezed their heels, their feet were far too large to go into it.

Then the royal chamberlain inquired whether there were any other young women in the house.

"Only a cinder-wench," said the elder of Cinderella's stepsisters. "Of course the slipper would not fit her. It would only be wasting time to trouble with her."

"Let her be brought here," ordered the royal chamberlain.



So, Cinderella was sent for and, sitting down in a chair, she stretched out her foot.

"Impertinence!" "Ridiculous nonsense!" cried both her sisters at once.

But the royal chamberlain stooped down and put the slipper to Cinderella's foot.

And, as it was her very own, it slipped on as easily as if it were made for her, which of course, it had been.

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Then, to the surprise of everyone, Cinderella drew the other little slipper from her pocket and put that on also.

At that moment the Fairy Godmother appeared and, with a touch of her wand, changed Cinderella's poor garments into beautiful robes, more splendid than ever.

And so everyone saw that she was indeed the beautiful princess that the Prince loved.

Then the sisters begged her forgiveness and Cinderella freely forgave them and asked them to try to love her.

The news quickly spread through the town and soon the Prince himself arrived and greeted Cinderella joyfully.

Then, Cinderella was taken to the palace and she and the Prince were married that very day.

Soon afterwards, Cinderella fetched her sisters to live at the palace. They were so much ashamed of their past conduct and so grateful for her kindness that they ceased to be proud and unkind.

And, as their hearts became good, their faces became beautiful. Then two lords of the court loved and married them and they, as well as Cinderella, were happy.

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